

THE SUPREME DEITY OF CHRIST ILLUSTRATED.

A

# DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

LORD'S DAY, APRIL 19, 1812,

BEFORE THE

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

IN BOSTON.

WITH AN

## APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

REMARKS ON THE TERMS "ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD," &c.

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BY THOMAS BALDWIN, D. D.

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CHURCH.

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No. 53 Cornhill.—1812.

THE CURRENT DUTY OF CHRIST ILLUSTRATED

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## APPENDIX

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REMARKS ON THE TRUTH "ONCE PRESENTED SON OF GOD," &c.

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## DISCOURSE.

MATTHEW XXII. 42.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE?

NO subject can challenge so deep an interest in our feelings, as that which relates to the salvation of the soul. Compared with this, all others sink into absolute littleness and contempt. If the soul be immortal, which has been the general opinion of mankind in all ages, it must be of the highest importance to secure its future and everlasting well-being.

Reason's feeble lamp can light us no farther than the tomb. Here it expires, and leaves us to pursue our wayward voyage on the vast ocean of eternity, without either chart or compass, and totally ignorant of our future destination. Conscious of guilt, we look round with anxiety, and ask, *How can man be just with God?* Natural religion can afford no satisfactory or decisive answer. If we explore the volumes of heathen philosophy, they will only convince us, that *the world by wisdom knew not God.* All inquiry proves ineffectual, until we repair to divine revelation. In this sacred volume, life and immortality are brought to light. Herein is revealed with the greatest clearness the stupendous plan of redemption. It is here that we are taught, how

*God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:* That "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In completing the work assigned him by his Father, Jesus resigned himself a prisoner to death. This was the last demand which the divine law could make upon him as our Surety. Its penalty could exact no more. Justice being thus satisfied, on the third day he was honorably discharged. An angel was sent from heaven, to disperse the guard, and roll back the *sealed stone* from the sepulchre. The prison doors were also unbarred, and *the pains of death loosed, because it was not possible that he should be longer holden of it.* On the evening of the same day in which he rose, when the disciples were assembled in a private room, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them and said, *Peace be unto you.* They gazed upon him with astonishment and joy, and could scarcely believe their own senses. Hence, with a view effectually to remove their doubts, and enable them with certainty to identify his person, he *showed them his hands and his feet*, in which the prints of the nails were still visible. Gracious Redeemer! What condescension to guilty worms! Were not the hearts of thy disciples overwhelmed with holy gratitude? Could even the incredulity of Thomas resist the evidence arising from such credentials as these? Was he not constrained, while beholding in thy sacred hands the prints of the nails, and looking into thy bleeding side, to exclaim, **MY LORD AND MY GOD!**

But all the evidences exhibited by Jesus of his divine mission did not bring the Jews generally to acknowledge him as the Messiah. They were more intent upon



proving him an impostor, than in examining the evidences by which his true character might have been ascertained. In the context we are told, that the Pharisees took council how they might entangle him in his talk. They first sent their disciples with the Herodians with a question respecting the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar. Had he answered it in the affirmative, he would have given great offence to the Jews who hated the Romans. Had he answered in the negative, they would have accused him of seditious designs against the Government. He perceived their wickedness, and answered them in such a way as not to commit himself to either party. The Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, advanced next with a question respecting a woman who had had seven husbands, and demanded of him which of them should have her in the resurrection, alleging that they had all had her to wife. Jesus answered and said unto them, *Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God: for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven.*

At length one of the Pharisees, who was a lawyer, probably a man of more subtilty and intrigue than any of them, "asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus gave an answer so fully in point as to put an end to their inquiries. Perceiving them all to be silenced, he proposed to them the following questions: *What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he?* They say unto him, the Son of David. He saith unto them, how then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son? And no man was able to answer him a word.

These questions proposed by our Lord, are infinitely momentous and solemn; and may be considered, as addressed to us individually: *What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?*

It is the design of the ensuing discourse to furnish a scriptural answer to these important questions; in doing which, we shall attempt to prove his SUPREME DEITY. This proof will be drawn from the character and titles given him by the prophets, by the apostles, by God the Father, and which were claimed by Christ himself; and also from the works he performed, and the attributes which he possessed. Your prayerful attention is requested.

FIRST, then, let us listen to the voice of the prophet. What were the characters and titles by which they designated the Messiah, whose advent they foretold?

"A virgin," said Isaiah, "shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his name IMMANUEL." Still looking, by the spirit of inspiration, down the lapse of time, he exclaimed, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful; Counsellor; *The Mighty God*; The Everlasting Father; The Prince of Peace."\* In announcing his approaching advent, he thus addressed Jerusalem, "Say unto the cities of Judah, *Behold your God!*"

Jeremiah, when speaking of the blessings of his reign, has these remarkable expressions. "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord*, (or Jehovah) *our righteousness*."†

\* Isa. vii. 14. ix. 6, 7.    † Jer. xxiii. 6.



Zechariah, foretelling the vicarious sufferings of Christ, (though without seeming to intend it,) has given a most decided testimony to the divine character of Jesus. "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the *Man that is my Fellow*, saith the Lord of hosts."\*

Micah, in describing the birth of the Saviour, delivered the following prediction: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth to me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, *whose goings forth have been from everlasting*," or as in the margin, *from eternity*!†

Let us for a moment review these titles and characters by which the prophets designated the Messiah. He shall be called "Immanuel," (God with us.) The government of the universe shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called the MIGHTY GOD, the Father of eternity.‡ Jehovah our Righteousness. Jehovah our Fellow, whose goings forth have been from eternity!

Do these titles, my brethren, indicate nothing more than a dignified mortal? Or do they teach us that he to whom they properly belong must be divine?

SECOND. The testimony of the apostles is in perfect agreement with that of the prophets.

*Matthew* declares, that Jesus is the Child which *Isaiah* prophesied a virgin should bear, and whose name was to be called IMMANUEL: which by interpretation is, GOD WITH US! GOD MANIFESTED IN OUR NATURE! This name is peculiarly descriptive of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ. It would be extremely absurd to suppose, that by the expression, "God with us," no more was intended,

\* Zech. xiii. 7. † Micah v. 2. ‡ עֵלֵינוּ Pater æternitatis.

than that he was with us by a special divine influence. Such communications had frequently been made to the ancient patriarchs and prophets. But would it not have been highly impious for the most eminent prophet to have assumed the title of *Immanuel*? Such pretence would have subjected any one to the charge of blasphemy, and exposed the infatuated person to death.

*John* is very full and decisive in his testimony of Christ. He assures us that the WORD, which was in the beginning, was not only with God, but was God. That this WORD was made flesh, or united to flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld this glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father,\* full of grace and truth. Speaking of the Word thus dwelling in flesh, he says; THIS IS THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE.

*Paul* is equally explicit in his epistle to Timothy: for saith he, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: GOD WAS MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH." The flesh in which God was manifested, was the flesh of Jesus; the holy progeny of the Virgin Mary, which the angel foretold should be called the SON OF GOD. This apostle further declares, that "In him," that is in Jesus, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."† Must we not from this expression conclude, that there was as great a display of the fulness of Deity in Jesus Christ, as in heaven itself, or in any other part of the universe? Had the apostle, instead of directing our views to Jesus, pointed us to the throne of God, and said, there dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; should we not at once have concluded, that he meant to say, there dwelleth the very essence of Deity! There all the divine perfections appear embodied?

\* See Appendix. † Col. ii. 9.



From Christ's calling himself *the Son of God*, the Jews drew the inference, that he made himself *equal with God*. And Paul, instead of considering the expressions hyperbolical, proceeds to confirm and vindicate the sentiment. "Who, saith he, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be *EQUAL WITH GOD*." To be equal with God, is to be God: for no created being, however exalted, can be equalled or compared with the uncreated Jehovah.\*

No created being may, without the greatest presumption, assume the titles and prerogatives of God. "I am the Lord," or Jehovah, "that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." How then, it may be asked, can it be given to Christ? He himself has explained it. "*I and my Father*," saith he, "*are One*." It is in this sense only, that we can admit him to be God. For no names, or attributes with which a created being could be dignified, could make him equal with God. When vested with all these, there would still be a greater distance between infinite and finite, than between the highest seraph, and the smallest insect, that crawls upon the earth.

But Paul has one other expression, which, if possible, is still stronger than any which we have yet mentioned. When speaking of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh: "Who (saith he) are Israelites — whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, *WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOREVERMORE. AMEN.*"†

*Peter*, though rather indirectly, has also given one of the most important and decisive testimonies to the supreme Deity of Christ, which is to be met with in the New Testament.

\* See the 40th chapter of Isaiah. † Rom. ix. 4, 5.

In writing to the strangers who were scattered abroad throughout different regions, he addresses them as "Elect according to the foreknowledge of *God the Father*, through sanctification of the *Spirit*, and sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ*." Here the whole Trinity is brought to view, as jointly concerned in the salvation of sinners; who are represented as chosen by the FATHER, redeemed by the SON, and sanctified by the HOLY SPIRIT. With a view to encourage these suffering christians to persevere under their trials, he assured them, that they should ere long receive the end of their faith, the complete salvation of their souls. "Of which salvation (saith he) the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what, and what manner of time, the SPIRIT OF CHRIST that was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

That the ancient prophets were under a divine inspiration when they delivered their prophecies, cannot be denied, without denying the authority of the holy Scriptures. But this faithful apostle assures us, that this inspiration was the Spirit of Christ in them. Can you admit the absurdity, that Christ could impart this divine inspiration, and yet be no more than a creature? I am confident you cannot. For you will observe, that the apostle does not represent Christ as the *medium*, through which the spirit of inspiration was communicated; but as the independent agent who gave that inspiration by his own Spirit. It hence follows, that we must either admit the supreme Deity of Christ, or acknowledge that the scriptures were not given by inspiration of God!



The prophets so clearly foretold the sufferings of Christ, that when conversing with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Jesus thus addressed them, "O fools and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and then to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." These things they had testified by the Spirit of Christ that was in them. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."\* "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."† "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."‡ These passages thus placed together fully explain each other, and bring us unavoidably to one of these conclusions; either that the Spirit of Christ, by which the prophets were enabled to foretell the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, was really the Spirit of God, or that the scriptures were not given by inspiration of God! If not divinely inspired, then they can claim no higher authority, than any other writings.

Thus you see, my brethren, that a denial of the supreme deity of Christ subverts the very foundation of our holy religion, and renders it little better than a cunningly devised fable.

Let us now collect the most prominent parts of this testimony to a point.

God with us; The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us; The true God and eternal life; In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; And who is over all, God blessed forevermore. If these

\* 2 Pet. i. 21.    † 2 Tim. iii. 16.    ‡ Rev. xix. 10.

titles are all applied to Jesus Christ, as they most certainly are ; we ask by what titles we shall describe the true God in distinction from him ? If every title, attribute, and work, by which God has made himself known, are applied to Jesus Christ, the fair conclusion is, that he must be God.

THIRD. Let us next consider the testimony of God the Father concerning the Saviour. Twice by an audible voice from heaven, he bore witness to his divine Sonship and mission. At Jordan, whither He had repaired, that by his own example he might *ratify* the baptismal institution, which his forerunner was sent to introduce—"Jesus being baptized, no sooner *arose out of the water*, than heaven was opened to him, and the Spirit of God appeared, descending like a dove and lighting upon him :\* And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Again upon the mount of transfiguration, when two glorified saints were permitted to re-visit our world, that they might behold their Saviour God, clothed in a body like those they once inhabited. While the Saviour conversed with them, an unusual glory surrounded his person. The humanity of Jesus, seemed almost wholly concealed in the splendours of the Godhead ! This wonderful sight, caused a strange joy to thrill through every bosom ; while Peter, with mingled emotions of astonishment and extasy, proposed to erect tabernacles for these illustrious personages. But just at this moment, a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, **THIS IS MY BELOVED SON ! HEAR HIM !** Moses and Elias rode off upon the cloud, and were seen no more.



There is indeed one other instance, where the divine Sonship of Jesus was acknowledged by an audible voice from heaven. In view of his approaching suffering, he thus prayed, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." This was done, when those signal evidences were given of his Messiah-ship during his sufferings on the cross; which were such as to compel the Roman *Centurion* to say, *truly this was the Son of God*: *The Son* to whom the Father saith, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."\*

FOURTH. It may be proper next to consider, what titles and characters Christ assumed to himself.

When the angel Gabriel was sent to inform Mary that she should be the Mother of the Messiah, he told her that the child to be born of her should be great, and should be called the SON OF THE HIGHEST. Conformably to this, Jesus constantly claimed the character of the SON OF GOD. At an early period when his mother expressed some astonishment, on finding him disputing with the Jewish Doctors in the temple, he said to her, *wist ye not, that I must be about my Father's business?*

That Jesus claimed this relation, in a very different, and much higher sense, than that which believers are admitted to by adoption, will not be denied. The dispute which the Jews commenced with Christ fully illustrates this remark. They accused him with having violated the law of the Sabbath, because he had healed a man on that day. In vindication of his conduct, he said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work!" But so far were the Jews from admitting this as an apology, that they considered him as having implicated himself,

\* Heb. i. 8.

in a much greater crime than violating the Sabbath. Hence it is said, "Therefore they sought the more to slay him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that *God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*" When they threatened to stone him, Jesus replied, Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered, for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God.*

Jesus certainly knew in what light the Jews understood him, when he called himself the Son of God; and that it was for this declaration that they charged him with blasphemy. If he knew that they had mistaken his meaning, is it not absolutely unaccountable, that he should not have explained himself, so as to have undeceived them? Does such a supposition comport either with the veracity, or benevolence of the Saviour? Would an apostle, nay would any good man have suffered such a mistake (admitting it to have been one) to have passed uncorrected? Would they have been willing to have deceived mankind, in a matter so dishonourary to God? When doubts were entertained respecting John the Baptist, and the Pharisees sent to know if he were the Christ, or whether they should look for another, he answered them with a frankness becoming his character as a good man, and without hesitation *confessed, I am not the Christ.*

So Peter and John, through whose instrumentality the lame man had been healed at the gate of the temple, when they perceived that the people were in danger of mistaking the power by which this miracle had been wrought, addressed them, saying, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our power or holiness we had made this man walk?" They seemed implicitly to



say, it is not we poor worms of the dust; no, but "the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus: And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong." It is hardly possible to conceive of a more contemptible character, than one who attempts to pass himself upon the world for what he is not. Such, by common consent, are universally branded with infamy.

Is it not evident to every capacity that Jesus was willing to have both his friends and foes believe, that his claims to divinity were well founded? Yea more, did he not expressly declare that it was the will of him that sent him, *that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*? And, surely, none will deny divine honours to the Father.

Ecclesiastical history furnishes a very singular story on this subject, which is so much in point that I will take the liberty to relate it. In the 4th century, during the reign of Theodosius, the bishops on a certain day went to court to pay their respects to his imperial majesty. The Emperor was seated on a throne of state, and his son Arcadius by him. Among the crowd, there was a venerable old bishop named Amphilochus. He knew that the Emperor had been suspected of favouring the Arians, and of entertaining unworthy notions of Jesus Christ. He determined, it seems, to address one argument to his feelings. Hence he very respectfully saluted the Emperor, but took no notice of his son. Theodosius was offended, and ordered him excluded from the company. "What!" exclaimed the old bishop, "are you affronted, Cesar! because I did not honour the son as I honoured the father? Assure yourself, Almighty God abhors such blasphemers, as do not honour

his only begotten Son as they honour him.\* It is said that this produced the desired conviction.

It is plain that the Jews understood Jesus, when he said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," to assert, that he possessed essentially the same divine nature and perfections as the Father; and that he performed *his* works in the same sovereign independent manner, as the Father did his. Indeed it seems impossible that they should have understood him in any other light.

If it were an error in the Jews to believe that Jesus meant, by calling himself the Son of God, to assert his divinity, his own disciples were equally involved in the deception: for they understood him precisely in the same manner.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that notwithstanding the scriptures maintain the relations of Father and Son, we are not to suppose, that there are two Gods, either distinct in nature, or even two of the same divine essence; but these expressions are to be understood conformably to what Christ has said on other occasions.

In reproving his disciples for their unbelief, Jesus said, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have *seen him*. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not *seen me*, Philip? HE THAT HATH SEEN ME, HATH SEEN THE FATHER."

It was evidently the intention of Christ by these observations, to reprove his disciples for not having conceived the full glories of his character; for not believing him when he said, "I and my Father are one."

\* Eccl. Researches p. 146.



Further, if Christ were not divine when on earth, he cannot be in heaven. For we are told, that the same Jesus whom the disciples saw ascend from Mount Olivet, shall come again in like manner. But since his ascension into heaven, in addressing John upon the Isle of Patmos, he assumed the titles and prerogatives of the supreme God. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY." This same declaration is repeated again as follows: "Fear not, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death." These last expressions help us to designate the person speaking. Though every word sounds like the voice of the infinite Jehovah, yet he says, "I am he that was *dead* and am *alive*."

Let us now for a moment review these solemn declarations made by Christ himself; and which were expressly intended to disclose his true character. "I am the Son of God." "My Father worketh, and I work." "I and my Father are One." "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "I am Alpha and Omega, the *first* and the *last*, the beginning and the ending, the Almighty." This is the language, and these are the titles claimed by him, who is emphatically styled *the faithful and true Witness*.

FIFTH. In proof of these claims Jesus constantly appealed to his works. "If I do not the works of my Father," said he, "believe me not." These works, however, in order to afford proof of his divinity, must be such as clearly transcend the powers of man; they must be such as none but God could do.

It must be acknowledged, that if restoring the *lame* by a word, and giving sight to the *blind* ; if unstopping the ears of the *deaf*, and causing the tongue of the *dumb* to speak ; if *fevers* and *leprosy*, *plagues* and *dæmons* obeying his voice and yielding to his authority :—in a word, if that Being who could walk in awful majesty upon the rolling billows, and by a word still the conflicting elements ; if he whose sovereign mandate could unbar the tomb, and cause the empire of death to resign its lawful captives, be not God, we shall labour in vain, to find proof that such a Being exists in the universe.

SIXTH. That the Godhead dwelt bodily in Jesus is proved, not only from the titles given him, and by the works he performed ; but from his possessing divine attributes.

There are certain attributes which natural as well as revealed religion teaches us, belong exclusively to God. Of this description are Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence. These are essential to the character of the infinite Jehovah, and must forever form a clear distinction between him, and all created beings. Must we not from hence conclude, that he who possesses these attributes, must be God ? Let us then for a moment inquire, whether the sacred scriptures do not attribute these perfections to Jesus Christ ; and whether he did not in fact possess them.

1. Can there be any greater effort of power than the production of a world ! We should certainly suppose that power to be unlimited, which was adequate to the work of creation. The sacred scriptures expressly ascribe the creation of the world to the Son of God. “ All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made : For by him (i. e. Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or domin-



ions, principalities or powers, and all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."\* If *creating* and *preserving* the universe, are not proofs of Omnipotent power, then we have no proof that such power exists.

You will permit me to lead your thoughts to a particular circumstance which was adduced by our Lord himself in proof of his Messiahship. It is indeed of a somewhat different nature from the preceding, but not of a less decisive character.

It is well known, that the Jews were frequently urging Christ to give them *some sign* that he was the true Messiah. In one instance he referred them to Jonah's being three days and nights in the sea, as being typical of his death and resurrection. On another occasion they again pressed him, saying, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "The Jews answered, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body." By mutilating his words the Jews accused him of threatening to destroy their temple. In support of this charge they procured two false witnesses who testified that they heard him say, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." This was a most base and malicious falsehood. Jesus had not threatened to destroy the Jewish, nor any other temple; but only said "destroy," or if ye "destroy this temple, (meaning his body) and within three days I will raise it up." What Christ proposed, though totally different from what his enemies charged him with, equally required the exertion of Om-

\* John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 3.

nipotent power. For, to raise a dead body which had lain under the power of death three days, as far transcended the powers of a finite being, as instantly to rear up a temple which had been thrown to the ground by an earthquake. Nothing less than Omnipotent power could effect either. But when the infatuated Jews, aided by the Roman soldiers, had laid in ruins the lovely temple of his body, within three days, according to his word, he raised it up again. Thus showing *that he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again.*

What voice less powerful than that of Omnipotence, could have withered a fig-tree to its roots, by only saying, "*Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever?*" And presently the fig-tree withered away."

2. The Omniscience of the Saviour was not less apparent than his Omnipotence. That God has the most perfect knowledge of all his creatures, will not be denied. But "canst thou by searching find out God, or the Almighty unto perfection?" It is implied that we cannot. But Jesus said, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." And as to man, he needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man. The following facts will justify the foregoing remarks.

Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and said of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile! Nathaniel saith unto him, whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, when thou wast under the fig-tree I SAW THEE." Conscious that none but the Omniscient God could have seen him, in the language of astonishment Nathaniel exclaimed, Rabbi! THOU ART THE SON GOD! THOU ART THE KING OF ISRAEL!



Nor was the astonishment of the disciples much less, when Jesus began to question them respecting their disputing by the way. For we are told they had been "disputing which of them should be greatest." They at once perceived, that their Lord, though absent at the time, perfectly *knew* all that had been said, and that every attempt at concealment would be in vain.

The Scribes who were present when Jesus healed a *paralytic*, and heard him say, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee, said within themselves, (that is, they thought within themselves) this man blasphemeth." But Jesus *knowing their thoughts* said, "Wherefore *think* ye evil in your hearts?"

Who, but the Omniscient God, can look into the sullen breast, and discern the thoughts as they rise from a state of embryo before they reach the lips for utterance?

The prophet Jeremiah declares that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" The answer is, "*I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins*, even to give to every man according to his works."\* When denouncing the conduct of Jezebel who had seduced some of the members of the church of Thyatira, Jesus said, "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that *I am he, which searcheth the reins and heart*, and will give unto every one of you according to your works."†

It will be acknowledged, that the heart of man has depths which no human sagacity can explore. The sullen brow like that of Joab may occasionally soften into a smile, for the base purpose of concealing the fatal dagger. Deception is half the business of man. But how vain were all the hypocritical acts practised by Iscariot in order to hide his wicked designs from Jesus! The

\* Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

† Rev. ii. 23.

*traitor* was seen in every previous movement, as clearly as in the garden. For Jesus *knew* from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. Nor could even the Prince of darkness, with all his infernal subtilty, though concealed in the darkest corner of hell, form a design to *sift and try the faith of Peter*, but it was perfectly known to Jesus.

Without admitting the Omniscience of Christ, it would be difficult to conceive, how he should be qualified to judge the world. The decisions of the last day we are assured are designed to bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart. For every secret work will be brought into judgment. No arts of concealment ; no hypocritical forms of goodness, will avail guilty sinners in the presence of the Son of Man, who is to be their final judge. A long catalogue of crimes, which have been known only to God and themselves, will then be disclosed before the assembled universe. How will the enemies of Christ be confounded, when they perceive that not only their *hard speeches which they have ungodly spoken against him*, have been fully known to him ; but that their *secret sins have all been in the light of his countenance?* And that their Judge has been a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of their hearts, and that all things, even those the most secret, have been naked and open to the eyes of him with whom they now have to do?* Should any be disposed to deny this attribute to Jesus now, it is believed the judgment day will convince them of their error. But I hasten to observe,

3. Omnipresence, or the universal presence of God, is to our feeble perception one of the most distinguishing attributes of Deity. This seems to fix with the utmost clearness the boundary between infinite and finite.



The presence of creatures is always local, or limited to some particular place. But the divine incomprehensible presence of God, fills ubiquity ! “ The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” “ Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off ? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him ? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord ?”

Impressed with this sentiment the Psalmist exclaimed, “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from *thy presence* ? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

“ O wondrous knowledge, deep and high,  
Where can a creature hide ?”

FURTHER. Do not the declarations which Christ has made in relation to himself, either prove his Omnipresence, or implicate his character as an impostor ?

To Nicodemus he said, “ No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man *which is in heaven*.” Here Christ speaks of himself as having come down from heaven, and as being still in heaven. Admit his Omnipresence, and the sense is plain ; deny it, and the passage will appear absolutely inconsistent. Christ conveyed precisely the same idea when he said, “ No man hath seen God at any time ; *he that is in the bosom of the Father* hath revealed him.”\*

But there are several other declarations which Christ made to his disciples, that are of the most clear and positive kind.

\* John i. 18.

With a view to encourage his people to meet together, he was pleased to say, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, **THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM.**" What a gracious promise ! What an encouraging declaration ! Shall we dispute its truth ? God forbid ! But if we admit its fair legitimate meaning, it will prove beyond all contradiction the supreme Deity of Christ. For who but an Omnipresent God, can be with all Christ's disciples when met in a thousand different places at the same instant of time ? But to suppose Christ to have made a promise which he is unable to fulfil, is at once to impeach his veracity, and must effectually destroy all confidence in him as the Saviour of the world. On the other hand, if it be granted that he can and does fulfil his promise, all is admitted that we plead for : for it is impossible to conceive, that a mere created being can be present with the people of God when assembled in different places, throughout the globe.

If Christ be not present with the assemblies of his people, it must be absurd in the extreme, to offer any act of religious worship to him. For, in this case, we cannot suppose him to know any thing of what we say or do. If indeed our divine Lord be not present with us when we meet, we might as well offer our prayers and praises to St. Paul, or to the Virgin Mary, as to him.

But have not Christians in all ages had abundant proof of the faithfulness of Christ, in the fulfilment of this promise ? Has not the Saviour's promised presence often encouraged his people to meet together ? and comforted them when met ? But, if cheered with no tokens of his presence and love, have they not lamented it as a lost season ? In a word, is it not the constant



language of God's people when about to assemble, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence?"\*

The instance we have been considering, is not a solitary one. Just before Christ left the world he commissioned his apostles, and directed them to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. But foreseeing the difficulties and discouragements they would have to encounter, and knowing their weakness and infirmities he left them this gracious promise: "*Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.*"

That this promise did not respect his personal presence is evident; for he had told them, that he was shortly to leave them and go to the Father. Nor did it respect the apostles personally: for they were not to continue to the end of the world. But even if they had continued, the same difficulty would have attended the fulfilment of the promise to them, as in giving it a more general application: For we can no more conceive of Christ's being present with each of his twelve apostles, scattered in different directions, through different countries, than of his being present with all his ministers until the end of time. The fact is, none but a God whose presence pervades the universe, can fulfil the promise in either case. I should suppose it impossible to vindicate the veracity of Christ in the foregoing promises, and not admit his supreme Deity.

With a view to keep his disciples from presuming on their own strength Jesus said to them, "without me ye can do nothing." And to prevent their desponding

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\* It is to be presumed, however, that those Christians who deny the supreme Deity of Christ, never expect nor even desire the gracious presence of the Saviour with them when met together. No, they are never guilty of such enthusiasm as this! But would they not do well to remember, that Jesus has said, without me ye can do nothing? What do we then without his presence?

in view of their own weakness, he gave the gracious promise we have been considering, *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.* But could any comfort or encouragement be derived from such a promise, without admitting the author to be divine? Should Gabriel make such a promise, we should neither believe nor derive any comfort from it; because we should know, that it would be impossible for him to fulfil it; inasmuch as an angel was never known to be in two places at once. We can no more conceive of a creature's possessing this attribute, than that a globe of 20 inches diameter, can comprise universal space. The tallest seraph that bends before the throne, is as utterly incapable of being present in different places at one and the same time, as any other created being, even of the lowest order.

But to question the propriety of Christ's promising to be with his people at all times; or his ability to fulfil such promise, would entirely destroy all confidence in him as the Saviour of the world. For none but a Saviour, who can be with his people under all their trials and temptations, and especially in the hour of death, can claim their unlimited confidence and affection.

If therefore Christ has made promises which none but a God can fulfil, (and such we have just shown that he has made,) I see no way to avoid the conclusion, but that either we must acknowledge him to be God, or consider him as an impostor!

From a view of the evidences exhibited in the preceding remarks, we adduce the following inferences.

1. That no character, however dignified with honours, if supreme Deity is denied, can be the Christ foretold by the prophets, and preached by the apostles—THE



CHRIST, in whom *all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily*.

2. If our preaching exhibit a character essentially different from the character exhibited of Christ by the prophets and apostles, it must be a false Christ; and consequently, all who believe in such a character, *believe a lie*.

3. We infer the importance of exhibiting the true character of Christ in all our preaching, otherwise we may deceive and ruin the souls of our hearers; and expose ourselves to the awful *anathema*, denounced by the apostle against such as preach another gospel.\* Can any thing be denominated *another gospel* with more propriety, than that which exhibits another Christ as the object of our faith, so different, and so inferior to him *who is over all, God blessed forever*?

4. That those, and those only who trust in a divine Saviour, can realize the happiness and peace, which was the design of the gospel to impart. They only can say, "we know in whom we have believed, that HE IS ABLE *to keep* what we have committed to him until that day." With the utmost sincerity they adopt the language of the Poet,

"Jesus, my God, I know his name,  
His name is all my trust :  
Nor will he put my soul to shame,  
Nor let my hope be lost."

5. From the view which we have taken of this interesting subject, we see the propriety of ascribing divine honours to the Son of God.

The angels who had worshipped him before his incarnation, received a new and special commandment to acknowledge his Godhead, when clothed in our nature

\* Gal. i. 8.

For “when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him.*”\* This we are assured is the same character, whom Isaiah saw in vision, *sitting upon a throne high and lifted up*, while the Seraphim with their faces veiled, were bowing before him and crying, “holy ! holy ! holy ! is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory !”† “These things said Esaias, when he *saw his glory* and spake of him,”‡ seven hundred and fifty-eight years before his incarnation !

6. Our subject leads us to notice the astonishing contrast between the views and feelings of redeemed sinners in heaven, and some professing christians on earth. John beheld the *former*, standing before the *throne and before the LAMB* clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and UNTO THE LAMB.*|| On earth we hear some who profess to be christians, ascribing salvation to him that sitteth on the throne, *through the Lamb* : but not *to him*, in union with the Father ! Thus while the worshippers in heaven ascribe equal and undivided honours to the Father and Son, and are continually saying, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, *and unto the LAMB forever and ever,*”§ the christians above referred to, never presume to associate the Son with the Father as an object of their worship.

Unless we admit, that the spirits of the just made *perfect* in heaven, may still err, we cannot hesitate in paying divine honours to Christ. Let us now, my dear hearers, apply the subject to ourselves.

\* Heb. i. 6.

† Isai. vi. 1, 2, 3.

‡ John xii. 41.

|| Rev. vii. 9, 10.

§ Rev. v. 13.



*What think ye of Christ?* I am confident not one of you will join with Jews and infidels, to denounce and execrate him as an impostor. Nor can you believe with Mahomet and his deluded followers, that "Jesus was a distinguished prophet, and to be ranked with Moses and Mahomet. This scheme, however, places Jesus nearly in the same rank, which modern Socinians and Unitarians have agreed to assign him. They allow that he was an eminent teacher sent from God, who conferred divine powers upon him, by which he was qualified for the high office which he sustains. But still they consider him no more than a man. Consistently with this sentiment, they refuse to offer any act of worship to him. They present their prayers *through* him to God. What think you, my brethren, of such a Christ as this! A mere created Saviour! A being equally as dependent as yourselves! Could you feel safe to trust your souls in such hands? Would it not be trusting in an arm of flesh? I imagine I hear you saying, none but a Saviour, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth, can be the object of my hope and trust.

But should any disbelieve the Supreme Deity of the Saviour, and conclude, that the *Arian* hypothesis gives a just representation of the person of Christ, I would reply in the language of the late excellent Mr. Boot. This scheme "represents him as a *created* God, and an *adorable* man. It compliments him with the *names* and *honours* of God, but renders him *dependent* as a worm. It acknowledges him as the object of angelic worship, and yet would have us consider him, in his *whole nature* as a man. When I view it in one point of light, it is much too high, and I cannot reach it; when in another, it is *infinitely too low*, and I detest it. I apply it to Jesus *the Son of Man*—here I gaze and wonder at the super-

angelic excellence of mere humanity. This I confess is too high for me. I do not, however, *adore* this astonishing man ; nor should I, did the sum total of all created excellence reside in him. I apply it to Jesus *the Son of God*—and behold ! it represents him as the *first link* in the immense chain of dependent beings, and reduces him to the size of a *mere creature* ! This is infinitely too low for me, and provokes my abhorrence. For as a human soul creating a world is above my comprehension : so a created God, a God of the same essence of myself is beneath my notice, and I detest the idea of paying him the least degree of adoration.”

Rejecting these degrading and contradictory speculations, let me exhort you, my dear brethren, to admit the testimony of the sacred oracles, and they will lead you to the true Messiah, whom Moses, in the law and the prophets, said should come. Having once found him, be exhorted to *hold fast the word of Life*, knowing that he is faithful who hath promised.

What a glorious and solemn prospect is opening before us ! Yet a little while and he that cometh, will come ! He that was once seen a weeping Babe in the manger at Bethlehem, will make his second appearance seated on a cloud, and attended by all the hierarchy of heaven. Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints. Then, loud as the archangel's trump, his sovereign voice will wake the entombed millions, who, starting from their dusty beds, will *hear the voice of the Son of God*, saying, “ Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment ! ” O my soul, art thou hastening to that awful day ! Yes, verily. For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. What fearfulness and trembling will then surprise the ungodly ! With what dis-



may will they behold their Judge descending, the dead arising, the world assembling, and their final doom approaching !

“ Sinners, awake betimes, ye fools, be wise,  
Awake before the dreadful morning rise :  
Change your vain thoughts, your crooked works amend,  
Fly to the Saviour, make the Judge your friend :  
Then join the saints, 'wake every cheerful passion ;  
When Christ returns, he comes for your salvation.”

God grant, that we may all then unite with the ransomed millions around the throne, in one never ending doxology of praise, “ Unto *him* that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to *him* be glory, and dominion forever and ever.

AMEN.

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## APPENDIX.

VERY different and contradictory explanations have been given of the expression "Only Begotten," as applied to Christ. It has been construed by some so as to furnish an argument against his Supreme Deity.

They have argued thus, that if the divine nature were begotten, then it could not, for that very reason, have been eternal. There must have been a time when it did not in any proper sense exist. This argument, it must be allowed, has much weight in it. And whoever admits the premises, will find it difficult to avoid the conclusion.

On the other hand, many who hold the supreme Deity of Christ, and his equality with the Father, have contented themselves, in saying with *Athanasius*, "that the Son was descended from the Father, by an *eternal generation* of an ineffable and incomprehensible nature." I freely confess the very terms here made use of, are to me "incomprehensible !" I should suppose, however, it is meant, that the divine nature of Christ was by this *eternal generation*, produced in some sense as other beings are by *natural generation*. If this be not what is meant by "eternal generation," I can affix no meaning to the expression. But can we conceive of pure divinity being generated, or produced ? Certainly I should suppose not : for whatever is generated or produced could not have been eternal. To account for the divine nature of Christ upon this principle, only crowds the difficulty further back ; but offers no rational solution. If the divine nature of Christ was produced by "eternal generation," it is of no consequence whether this were only one day before time began, or ten thousand ages. It had a beginning. But no claim to divinity can be supported, which does not rest upon eternal existence.

But is it not more scriptural, as well as more rational, to apply the expression exclusively to the human nature of Christ, which, we are expressly informed, was produced by the special agency of God in a way that no other being ever was produced ?

When Mary was told that she should conceive and bear a Son, she asked with astonishment, "How can this thing be, seeing I know not a man!" The Angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, *therefore also*, that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

By applying the term "Only Begotten," to the human nature of Christ thus miraculously produced, we by no means exclude the necessity of the union of the *divine nature*, as being essential to his complete character. For without this, he could not in any peculiar sense be the "Son of God." The divine nature is as essential to the complete character of Christ as the Son of God, as the rational soul, which is the distinguishing characteristic of man, is to the character of man.

If there be any thing divine belonging to Christ, it must have been eternal, and of the same essence of the Father; as the idea of divinity being generated or produced, is as inconceivable, as of its being created. Therefore we conclude, that the second Adam, was the Lord from heaven, who united himself to this portion of human nature, thus miraculously produced; and in consequence of which, he was properly called the "Only Begotten Son of God."

It is impossible for a finite mind fully to comprehend that which is infinite. Yet we can as easily conceive of the *divine essence* so dwelling in the Father and the Son, by the same nature, attributes and feelings, as that the Godhead may act in as perfect harmony, as if confined to the Father alone.

In this view, Christ could say, "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also." In this sense also there appears a perfect harmony between Gen. i. 1, and Col. i. 16. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "For by him (Jesus Christ) were all things created that are in heaven and in earth."—"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."\* A created Creator, we should suppose of all absurdities, the most absurd.

It is conceived that the relations of Father and Son import no shade of difference in the divine essence; but only the characters in which the Deity most familiarly makes himself known to the children of men.

\* John i. 3.



To deny that the Son of God existed in his divine nature before his incarnation, would be to deny some of the plainest declarations of scripture. Nor will any acknowledgment of his pre-existence as a created being, whether human, angelic, or super-angelic, at all relieve the difficulty. For what the scriptures ascribe to him, as far transcends the powers of angelic nature, as of human.

The assertions which Christ made respecting his pre-existence, drew upon him the cavils of the unbelieving Jews. "I (said he) came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" They supposed he had not existed fifty years; but he declared, "Before Abraham was I am."

When about to assume our nature in order that he might put an end to the legal sacrifices by the offering up of himself, he said, "A body hast thou prepared me." And when closing the scene of life he made the following request, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which *I had with thee before the world was.* We must either give up our Bible, or admit that these passages clearly assert the pre-existence of Christ: Not of his human soul; for the works ascribed to him, before his incarnation, as well as the title given him, will agree with none, but a *divine person*.

But if we admit that the second Adam, was the "Lord from heaven," who by uniting himself to the *holy progeny* of the Virgin, the body thus mysteriously prepared, and hence called the *Only Begotten of the Father*, we are led to the true Messiah; and may say with Philip, "we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write."

In this complex character, we behold the ROOT and OFFSPRING of David! In his divine nature, Christ is the Root from whence David derived all his hopes of eternal blessedness. But in his human nature, he is David's Offspring. Thus he is called the Son of David, and yet David acknowledges him as his Lord.

Should it be said, that the appellation under consideration was given to Christ before his incarnation, it will be admitted. But it is not perceived how this should affect the argument, any more than his being "called a Child born, and a Son given," seven hundred years before his birth. A text the most in point of any that I recollect is Psal. ii. 7. "I will declare the decree, the LORD hath said unto me, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*"

Here David was authorized to declare the *decree*, respecting the incarnation of the Son of God. But are we to suppose that the day in which he made this declaration was the day in which the *Son was begotten* ? or was it said by anticipation ? I certainly think the latter.

That the *divine nature* of Christ was called the Son of God, before his incarnation, will readily be admitted. But whether this, as distinguishing that portion of the divine essence, which dwelt in the man Jesus from the Father, was not so called in reference to that mysterious union which it was "decreed" should take place, will be referred to the judicious and candid to decide.

Does it not appear absolutely inconsistent with every idea which has been attached to the terms "begotten," and "only begotten," to apply them to the divine nature of Christ ? But in the application we have given, no violence is done to their common acceptance.

The foregoing remarks are, with much deference, submitted to a candid public ; hoping they may prove subservient to the sincere christian, in strengthening his faith in the Son of God, as a Saviour who is truly divine.



